

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

S E C R E T STATE 259603

LIMDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR WILLIAM G. BOWDLER

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO ASUNCION BRASILIA LA PAZ
MONTEVIDEO SANTIAGO FROM BUENOS AIRES 22 NOV 74:

QUOTE S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 8568

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AR, US

SUBJ: ARGENTINE REACTION TO QUITO CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: WHILE IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS BOTH FONMIN VIGNES
AND JUSTICE MINISTER BENITEZ HAVE DEPICTED QUITO CONFERENCE
IN FAIRLY POSITIVE TERMS, PRIVATE VIEW OF ARGENTINE OFFICIALS
IS SOMEWHAT LESS SANGUINE. SOME CONCERN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED AS
TO WHAT US POSITION AT QUITO IMPLIES WITH REGARD TO BROADER US
INTENTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE QUITO CONFERENCE, EMBOFFS HAVE NOTED SOME CONCERN IN
FONMIN THAT ITS CONSEQUENCES MAY PROVE DAMAGING TO MARCH
MFM. THIS WAS CONFIRMED AND EXPANDED UPON IN LENGTHY NOV 20

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DISCUSSION WITH FRANCISCO PULIT, CHIEF OF LATIN AMERICAN

DIVISION AND ONE OF VIGNES' CLOSEST CONFIDENTS. PULIT'S VIEW OF QUITO (WHICH WE BELIEVE REFLECTS THAT OF VIGNES, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST) WAS NOT APOCALYPTIC. HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT HAD RESULTED IN DISASTER FOR INTERAMERICAN SYSTEM. HE DID, HOWEVER, BELIEVE IT WOULD HAVE UNPLEASANT CONSEQUENCES IN A NUMBER OF WAYS. FIRST OF ALL, IT WOULD COMPLICATE ARGENTINA'S ROLE AS HOST FOR MARCH MFM. DIVISIONS HAD BEEN DEEPENED AND ANIMOSITIES HEIGHTENED BY QUITO FAILURE. IT WOULD NOW BE MORE DIFFICULT TO ASSURE A SUCCESSFUL MFM. GOA WONDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, IS URUGUAY, PARAGUAY AND CHILE WOULD COME IF CUBA INVITED. OTHERS MIGHT DECLINE IF IT IS NOT INVITED. IT WOULD, MOREOVER, BE DIFFICULT TO PREVENT BICKERING OVER CUBA ISSUE FROM OBSCURING OR INTERFERING WITH DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEMS. SECONDLY, IN PULIT'S VIEW QUITO FAILURE WOULD BE AT LEAST TEMPORARILY DAMAGING TO INTERAMERICAN SYSTEM, THOUGH DAMAGE COULD PROBABLY BE REPAIRED. AND FINALLY, HE FEARED NEGATIVE IMPACT ON US DIALOGUE WITH LA.

3. IN ADDITION TO ABOVE CONCERNS, PULIT ADMITTED TO A SENSE OF PUZZLEMENT CONCERNING US POSITION. HE EMPHASIZED THAT ARGENTINES IN NW WAY BLAMED US FOR QUITO FAILURE THOUGH SOME OTHER STATES DID. INDEED, HE POINTED OUT, ARGENTINA ITSELF HAD NOT BEEN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT QUITO CONFERENCE. IT WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO STICK TO ORIGINAL TIMETABLE. ONCE MOMENTUM FOR CONFERENCE HAD BUILT UP, HOWEVER, ARGENTINA HAD ACCEPTED REALITIES OF SITUATION AND ADJUSTED ITS POSITION. THEY HAD NOT EXPECTED US TO VOTE OR OPENLY LOBBY FOR THE RESOLUTION. HOWEVE, GIVEN THE PRAGMATIC CONSIDERATION THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN BEST INTERESTS OF INTERAMERICAN SYSTEM AND OF SUCCESSFUL MARCH MFM TO PASS QUITO RESOLUTION, THEY HAD THOUGHT THAT US MIGHT QUIETLY INDICATE TO CERTAIN UNDECIDED COUNTRIES THAT WHILE IT INTENDED TO ABSTAIN, IT WOULD NOT BE OVERLY CONCERNED IF SANCTIONS LIFTED. THAT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT HAVE PRODUCED TWO OR THREE MORE VOTES IN FAVOR OF THE RESOLUTION, BUT AT THE VERY LEAST THE US WOULD HAVE APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN INTERESTED AND ENGAGED IN THE PROCESS. AS IT WAS, DESPITE CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE US DELEGATION AND HEARING FULL EXPLANATION OF THE LATTER'S POSITION, MANY IN THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION, AFTER CAREFUL AND DISPASSIONATE ANALYSIS, STILL PERCEIVED THE US POSITION AS ONE OF DI SENGAGEMENT AND

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THERE WAS REAL CONCERN AS TO THE IMPLICATIONS THIS MIGHT HAVE IN BROADER CONTEXT OF US-LA RELATIONS. DID US DISENGAGEMENT AT QUITO PRESAGE DISENGAGEMENT FROM DIALOGUE WITH LA AND SIGNAL NEW PERIOD OF US NEGLECT FOR LA IN GENRRAL? IF US INTEREST NOT LESSENED, THEN TIME HAS COME FOR LA STATES TO GIVE "POLITICAL MANDATE" TO OAS TO MOVE FORWARD ON AGENDA.

4. EMBOFFS ASSURED PULIT THT US HAD NOT LOST INTEREST. US

MORE INTEESTED THAN EVER IN DIALOGUE AND HAD NOT THOUGHT OF
DISENGAGEMENT. ARGENTINE PERCEPTION IN THIS SENSE WAS INCORRECT.
IF QUITO FAILURE PROVED ANYTHING IT WAS NEED FOR CLOSER CON-
SULTATIONS, PARTICULARLY ON "POLITICAL" ISSUES.

5. PULIT EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR ASSURANCES BUT REMAINED
SKEPTICAL. EMBOFFS CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT DURING PREPARATION
FOR MFM IN MONTHS AHEAD, US WOULD HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO
DEMONSTRATE ITS CONTINUED REOLVE WITH RESPECT TO DIALOGUE AND
DEVELOPING A MORE VIABLE INTERAMERICAN SYSTEM. MONTLLOR UNQUOTE
INGERSOLL

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